DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 066 086 FL 003 399

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | McCulloch, John I. B., Ed. |
| TITLE | English Around the World, Number 5. |
| INSTITUTION | English-Speaking Union of the U. S., New York, N. Y. |
| PUB DATE | Nov 71 |
| NOTE | 8p. |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29 |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Educational Programs; *English (Second Language); *Foreign Countries; Foreign Culture; Language Instruction; Language Planning; *Language Programs; *Language Role; Modern Languages; Newsletters; Non English Speaking; Official Languages; Second Language Learning; Second Languages |
| IDENTIFIERS | Africa; Burma; Mexico; Somalia; West Germany |

ABSTRACT

This newsletter discusses the teaching and role of English around the world. Articles also cover English-language media in a given country, and the opportunity and need for understanding and speaking English in that country. This particular issue contains items on English-language education and use in Africa, Mexico, St. Martin, Burma, West Germany, and Somalia. (VM)

EU 066086

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Number 5 November, 1971

ENGLISH AROUND THE WORLD

GEORGE C. McGHEE
*Chairman*

LEWIS W. DOUGLAS
*Honorary Chairman*

ARCHBOLD VAN BEUREN
*President*

ALFRED M. GRUENTHER
*Honorary Chairman*

A publication of The English-Speaking Union of the United States
16 East 69th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021

Editor, *English Around The World*, JOHN I. B. McCULLOCH • Managing Editor, AUSTIN E. BASNER

FL003 399

## ENGLISH IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

Ever since the birth of this publication, the editors have been intrigued by the prospects of English in Francophone Africa—new nations which were formerly administered by France or Belgium. We now have reports in from a few of these emerging nations —and although individual circumstances differ widely, as will appear—a few generalizations might be made. Among them:

1) The French, who contribute substantially to the budgets of their former African colonies, hold a firm rein on the educational systems. In virtually each of these countries a representative of Académie Française is for all practical purposes in charge of secondary instruction. The results of baccalaureate examinations (high school finals) are graded at Bordeaux in France or at a nearby university such as Dakar in Senegal or Madagascar which are controlled by the French. This influence goes far beyond the educational field of course. Air Afrique and Air Madagascar are in fact branches of Air France, and the pilots are French. The whole communication system is in French. To talk from Cotonou in Dahomey to Niamey, Niger, the message goes through Paris Central.

2) In a continent where the general degree of literacy is as low as it is in Africa, and where the first non-tribal language learned in former French or Belgian colonies is of necessity French (Flemish too is mentioned in a report from Rwanda), it would be too much to expect any spectacular upsurge on the part of English. However, and this is an important thing to note—there *has* been a great deal of interest shown in English by the political and social élite of French-speaking Africa in the last several decades, and were it not for the firm educational control exercised from Paris (and, to a lesser extent, Brussels)—it is probable that the English language would have made as marked an advance as it has in various other areas of the world in the same era.

So much for generalizations. Now, for particulars, country by country.

a) Dahomey. Located north of the Gulf of Guinea,

*(Continued on page 4)*

## SOUTH OF THE BORDER— DOWN MEXICO WAY

by DONALD M. DECKER

[*For a brief note on Dr. Decker, see conclusion of this article.*]

By sharing a long common border with the largest English-speaking nation in the world, Mexico finds itself perhaps more strongly motivated to emphasize the learning of English than any other non-English-speaking country. The importance of the English language in Spanish-speaking Mexico is further enhanced by its being the foremost channel of international communication in varied aspects: technological, commercial, scientific, and political as well as social and cultural.

Tourism is one of Mexico's major industries. Over one million U.S. citizens visit Mexico annually, and many thousands reside there permanently. American cultural influence is ever-present in the form of motion pictures, music, fashions, publications, and expressions.

English is currently the most widely taught and used foreign language in Mexico. This is true despite some minor opposition to the language because of certain historical resentments toward the powerful neighbor to the north.

The English language is publicly manifest in Mexico in written and spoken forms: in newspapers, periodicals, and books; in television and radio programs, films, lectures, and plays.

*The News*, a full-length newspaper printed entirely in English, is published daily in Mexico City and distributed to all parts of the country. Two of the major Spanish-language daily newspapers of Mexico, *El Universal* and *Excelsior*, regularly contain one or two pages of news items printed entirely in English. In addition to these, certain U.S. newspapers are regularly available at major newsstands. Some of these are the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Chicago Tribune*, *San Diego Union*, *San Antonio Evening News*, and *The Brownsville Herald*.

There are numerous tourist periodicals in English published in Mexico daily, weekly, and monthly.

*(Continued on page 2)*

**DOWN MEXICO WAY** *(from page 1)*

Some of these, for example, are *Mexico City Daily Bulletin, The Gazer, This Week, This is Mexico, Now in Mexico,* and *Mexico – This Month.*

Periodicals in English published in Mexico include *Mexican-American Review, Mexican Life, Mexico Quarterly Review,* and *Meso-American Notes* (the latter two being journals of the University of the Americas). Mexican publications which are partially printed in English include *Intercambio* (a publication of the British Chamber of Commerce) and *La Capital* (a magazine similar to the *New Yorker,* the last section being printed in English). In addition, major magazines published in the United States, such as *Time, Life, Newsweek, Look, Reader's Digest,* and *Ladies' Home Journal,* are readily available at all major distributing points throughout the republic.

The major distributors of books for sale which are printed in English are the American Bookstore and the Librería Británica (British Bookstore) although most bookstores in Mexico have at least a few books in English. Certain libraries have large holdings of materials in English. The Benjamin Franklin Library system, aided by the U.S. Government and American libraries, has its main branch in Mexico City and six branches in Guadalajara, Hermosillo, Mazatlán, Monterrey, Puebla, and Tampico. The Mexico City branch, founded in 1942, contains 40,000 volumes, 500 periodicals, and 21 newspapers. Other sizable libraries stocked almost entirely with books in English are the University of the Americas library (57,000 volumes), the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute Library (18,000 volumes), and the Mexico City American School Library (18,000 volumes). Major Mexican libraries, particularly those maintained by universities, contain substantial holdings in English, especially in scientific and technical fields.

With regard to opportunities for Mexicans to hear spoken English, these are provided mainly by television and radio programs, films, and plays as well as by the ever-present English-speaking tourists and residents.

A few U.S. television programs are shown in English. These consist of some popular musical shows (e.g., "The Tom Jones Show"), important sports events (e.g., the baseball World Series), and historical events of international importance (e.g., the U.S. first moon landing). Usually a Spanish commentator interprets the English explanations. Many other popular American television series are regularly shown in Mexico, and although dubbed-in Spanish replaces the original English dialogues, the cultural content remains obviously American.

English lessons are often offered on Mexican television. For example, "Let's Learn English," a U.S. Information Agency Videotape furnished by the U.S. Embassy was shown on Telesistema Mexicano (Channel 4 in Mexico City) from 4:00 to 4:15 p.m. five days weekly for a period of five years until September 19, 1969. The taped lessons were followed by fifteen minutes of "live" explanations and drills presented by Miss Charmian Lindsay.

"English by Television" is provided by XEIPN (Channel 11 in Mexico City operated by the National Polytechnic Institute) five days weekly from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. with repetitions on Tuesday and Thursday, beginning October 20, 1969. The series is presented jointly by the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute and the National Polytechnic Institute. It consists of a BBC videotape, "English by Television: Walter and Connie," fifteen minutes in length and provided by the British Council, followed by fifteen minutes of explanations and drills by Mrs. Richard Rossner, a teacher at the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute.

"Telesecundaria" is a series of secondary school classes offered via television during morning hours throughout the country, sponsored by the Ministry of Public Education. In Mexico City, for example, on educational Channel 5, seventh grade English is scheduled from 11:10 to 11:30 a.m.; eighth grade English, from 9:20 to 9:40; and ninth grade English, from 9:40 to 10:00 a.m. Each of these courses is scheduled three days weekly and is intended to be followed by thirty minutes of review and exercises under a teacher's supervision.

Certain Mexican radio stations broadcast programs in the English language. In Mexico City radio station XEVIP broadcasts eighteen hours daily and is a CBS affiliate, with a Texas hook-up to receive from New York City. It provides news and musical entertainment. Radio station XEM-FM is independent and provides seventeen hours daily of news, music, and community service features. It is affiliated with the Mexican daily newspaper, *The News.* Radio station XEL provides teen-age disc jockey programming two hours daily, Monday through Saturday.

The Guadalajara radio station XEHL-FM provides eighteen hours daily of news and music. It is a CBS affiliate, but has no connection with XEVIP in Mexico City. In Acapulco radio station XECI provides one hour daily of news and music and is independent.

English lessons for Mexicans are offered by radio station XEUN ("Universidad de México") from 10:15 to 10:30 a.m. (repeated at 7:15 to 7:30 p.m.), Monday through Saturday. These are BBC recordings, including "English for Today" for beginners and intermediates, "Keep up your English" for intermediates, and "Martin and Maria" for advanced students.

English is the leading foreign language taught in Mexican schools at all levels. It accounts for probably over ninety per cent of all foreign language classes in the country. French is the second most popular foreign language, followed to a far lesser degree by other European languages, such as German and Italian.

In the public school programs, English is taught mainly at the secondary school level, corresponding to the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades in the United States. In private schools, however, it is usually taught at all levels – from nursery school through university.

Most private nursery schools and kindergartens

make at least an attempt to teach some basic words and phrases in English. In the public elementary schools (first through sixth grades) English is rarely offered, but it is relatively widely taught in the private schools. In the latter, classes may be offered from a minimum of two or three hours in the fifth and sixth grades to a maximum of several hours daily throughout all six grades. This is the case in the bilingual schools and the so-called "American Schools," of which there are eight at the present time – in Durango, Guadalajara, Mexico City, Monterrey, Pachuca, Puebla, Querétaro, and Torreón. These receive partial grants-in-assistance from the Office of Overseas Schools, U.S. Department of State, and offer from six to twelve years of U.S.-style instruction. The Greengates School in Mexico City offers British-style classes taught entirely in English from the first to the twelfth years.

Mexican public secondary schools (corresponding to American seventh, eighth, and ninth grades) are required by the Ministry of Public Education to offer three fifty-minute classes of foreign language instruction weekly. Over ninety per cent teach English; the remaining, French. The large majority of Mexicans currently studying English are secondary school students. Despite the federal government requirement, it appears that English teaching is least effective in the public secondary schools. Reasons for this are excessively large and crowded classrooms, poorly trained teachers, and too few periods per week.

In the matter of English instruction private secondary schools often fare somewhat better than their public counterparts. Classes are generally smaller and may be scheduled more frequently.

The so-called preparatory schools of Mexico, corresponding to the senior high school level in the United States (tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades), aim to prepare the student for university studies. Four foreign languages – English, French, German, and Italian – are taught in these schools on a schedule of three fifty-minute periods per week during all three years. Over eighty per cent of the students choose to study English rather than the other languages. Teachers of English in the preparatory schools are generally better prepared than those in secondary schools and are given more freedom to experiment with new methods.

University departments of English offer courses in English language, linguistics, literature, and teaching theory. Some students become preparatory school and university teachers of English. English teachers, particularly at the secondary school level, are prepared at the Higher Normal Schools, dependent on the Ministry of Public Education, as well as in the National Autonomous University of Mexico system.

The University of the Americas, which was recently moved to a new site near Puebla, is unique in being the only fully accredited American-style university outside the United States. Nearly all of its instruction is offered in the English language.

Perhaps the most significant contribution to English teaching in Mexico is that rendered by the fourteen American-Mexican and three Anglo-Mexican cultural relations institutes or "binational centers," as they are commonly called. These autonomous institutions receive cooperation from American and British government agencies. They offer English courses directly to a total of approximately thirty thousand adolescent and adult Spanish-speaking students at widely distributed locations throughout the Mexican republic. Their extensive and intensive English instructional programs exert a noteworthy influence in Mexico and even beyond into major portions of Spanish-speaking America.

The fourteen Mexican-American binational centers are dedicated to fostering friendship and understanding between the peoples of Mexico and the United States. Their principal activity is teaching American English to Mexicans, primarily adults. They receive aid in varying degrees from the U.S. Information Agency. The first and largest center was established in Mexico City in 1947. Thirteen additional institutes are now in existence in Chihuahua, Colima, Guadalajara, Hermosillo, Mérida, Monclova, Monterrey, Morelia, Saltillo, San Luis Potosí, Tampico, Torreón, and Veracruz. The Mexican-American Cultural Institute in Mexico City offers the most important English teaching program for adults in the country as well as serving as a model throughout the Americas. It is the largest institution in Mexico dedicated primarily to English teaching. Its textbook series is used in nearly all Spanish American countries.

In addition to the binational centers, there are numerous private language institutes scattered throughout the major population centers of Mexico. Almost all of these offer courses in English for adults; many, for adolescents as well. Some of the better known of these institutes are the Berlitz School of Languages (which has seven branches in Mexico), the Institute of Modern Languages, Mexico City Center of Bilingual Studies, Coronet Hall, Harmon Hall, and Interlingua of Mexico.

In summary, it is to be noted that the use of the English language is constantly growing in Mexico. Newspapers, periodicals, and books in English are spreading. Television and radio programs, films, lectures, and plays in English are increasing. The teaching of the English language surpasses by far the teaching of all other foreign languages together and extends widely throughout Mexican educational institutions from nursery schools to universities. In short, the English language appears to be thriving in Mexico today.

*Donald M. Decker, Ph.D., who taught English to adult professional men in Latin America for seven years, is at present chairman of the Department of English as a Second Language at Elbert Covell College, University of the Pacific, the first and only Spanish-speaking college in the United States. Dr. Decker recently spent six months in Mexico gathering research materials for a book on the teaching of English in that country.*

**FRANCOPHONE AFRICA** *(from page 1)*

Dahomey is peculiar in that it has a Presidential Council, consisting of three Presidents. Since last spring Hubert Maga, the First President, has been taking daily English lessons given by an American official. Some other government officials are also taking instruction—there is one class for beginners, and one for intermediate students. Radio Dahomey uses BBC and The Voice of America teaching tapes twice weekly.

English is taught as a compulsory subject in all secondary schools. There are seven Peace Corps volunteers teaching English, one or two Englishmen, two or three Canadians, other instructors from Nigeria and Ghana, and some Frenchmen. These latter, in the words of our correspondent from Dahomey, can be "more English than the English" when engaged in this particular activity.

Our correspondent also calls attention to the influence of jazz music in English—the words are imitated by the natives.

In Cotonou, the administrative capital, there exists a Centre Culturel Américain. Such a center also existed in Porto Novo, the intellectual capital, but has now been closed, partly due to budgetary reasons and partly because of the government's recent decision to establish the new Dahomean National University in Abomey-Calavi, adjacent to Cotonou.

Seminars are given jointly by the Ministry of National Education, The American Cultural Center and the British Council. Also USIA (the United States Information Agency) sponsors adult courses of English training for approximately 265 government functionaries taught at the American Cultural Center in Cotonou by four American contract teachers.

This last summer the American Cultural Center organized a special intensive (three hours daily) course in reading English for eight Dahomean geologists. This course was established at the request of the local Directeur des Mines. The Union Oil Company of California has cooperated in this undertaking and has provided geologist's dictionaries for the classes that are held at the American Cultural Center in Cotonou.

Despite French jealousy of its prerogatives, English is probably on the way up.

Our Dahomeyan source mentions one more interesting point, and that is the resurgence of German influence in that country (after all, neighboring Togo was once German-controlled). As far as Africa is concerned Germany offers no present threat, political, military or economic; by and large, Germans are liked. The former Director of Radio Dahomey, Dr. Emile Ologoudou, received his doctorate in sociology from the University of Cologne, and recently organized a Dahomeyan-German Association. Germans are helping to build Dahomey's main radio station just outside Cotonou, and Deutsche Welle, with headquarters in Kigali, Rwanda, is broadcasting radio programs throughout Africa.

b) Chad. We have the following information from Fort Lamy.

"English is taught in two types of schools: *College d'Enseignement Général*, which covers the equivalent of American grades 8-11, and Lycees which are equivalent to American high school and first two years of college. English is an optional subject in both, but in the C. E. G. it is the only foreign language available, while the Lycées also offer German, Russian, and Classical Arabic. During the last 3 years of Lycée, students may study two foreign languages at once. English is taught four hours a week. There are 34 teachers whose native tongue is English and 19 French.

"The U.S. Information Service considers its English teaching program as a major activity. It conducts classes for beginners, intermediates, and advanced students. English teaching materials are given to schools, some Chadian teachers are sent on travel grants to the U.S., and VOA (Voice of America) English teaching tapes are broadcast on Radio-Chad.

"There is considerable interest in learning English in Chad. It is encouraged officially by President Tombalbaye. There must be more teachers, and better trained ones."

c) Central African Republic. This, according to our information from Bangui, "remains one of the most under-developed countries on the continent. Efforts at improving basic essentials are still far from meeting the tremendous need. Therefore any consideration about a greater use of English is far down on the list of concerns at this time. English is taught, however, in most of the secondary schools, and although not actually required, is becoming almost universally studied. The majority of the students go on to France to complete their studies, hence their English is lost. English classes are conducted at the American Cultural Center, and interest in studying English has been evidenced by members of the government."

d) Niger. This Francophone country (not to be confused with Anglophone Nigeria) is of particular interest, since it was in the capital of Niger, Niamey, that a conference was held in February 1969 where representatives of 30 French-speaking countries on four continents was held with the view of creating an agency to promote cultural cooperation. No sensational developments have followed this. Let us hear directly from Niamey.

"English is taught in the nation's 33 secondary schools, the country's highest educational facility for civil servants, and a regional aeronautics and meterological school. It is not a compulsory subject, however, and Spanish is also offered in some schools. Aside from Peace Corps volunteers and three British VSOs, (Volunteers for Service Overseas), there are no Nigerian teachers of English who are native speakers. For all, it is an acquired tongue, reinforced by regional AID, USIS and Peace Corps English-teaching seminars.

"There is only one school in Niger where English is the language of instruction—a small American missionary institution with a few African pupils.

"About half of those Nigerian students who leave the country for advanced education go to other African countries (Senegal or Ivory Coast) and the remainder to French institutions.

"The emphasis here is on greater literacy in French, and the main African languages of the country, Hausa, Djerma and Kanouri. As it is now, less than 13 percent of the total school-age population are actually enrolled in classes. It is true that an increasing number of the élite groups are becoming more aware of the advantages of English; indeed, President Diori takes daily lessons from Peace Corps, Embassy and USIS personnel. But the trickle-down effect is many years away, particularly with the Francophone movement receiving increased attention in the past two years."

e) Senegal. Here is our report from Dakar.

"The official language, and the language of instruction in the schools remains French, and there is little chance of it being replaced by English or an African language in the near future.

"English has always been a required subject in secondary school, beginning with the 8th grade. However, very few Senegalese go to secondary school, and even fewer go for more than a couple of years. Furthermore, most English teachers here are not native speakers of English and they employ old-fashioned teaching methods which stress reading and translation.

"Recently, however, the situation has been improving. The Center for Applied Linguistics at the University of Dakar has produced an africanized English textbook series which stresses conversation and uses tapes and pictures extensively. This text is already being used in some schools in the Dakar area, and as teachers are trained to use it, the government plans to adopt it throughout the country.

"Many of the educated élite speak English, most can read it, and the official government policy is to promote English to further pan-africanism. Unfortunately, Senegalese have little chance to use what English they have learned. All films here are in French, and the American and British films are always dubbed into French, never subtitled. There are no local publications in English. The one radio station has a 20-minute news program in English during prime time, and plays a lot of popular music with English lyrics. The only neighboring country which has English as an official language is The Gambia, and the Senegalese use their native languages to communicate with the Gambians."

f) Upper Volta. From Ouagadougou (we hope you are as enchanted with the name as we are) comes the following:

"English is a compulsory subject in all 44 public and private secondary schools in Upper Volta and in the country's four small schools of higher learning. Approximately 10,000 students—the total enrollment—are therefore studying English.

"English teaching begins in the first year of secondary school, which is the equivalent of seventh grade, and continues through the final year, the equivalent of thirteenth. Therefore, secondary school graduates have seven years of English. But only a few hundred of the thousands who enter secondary school go all the way; the majority do not reach the tenth grade, and so the average Voltan secondary student probably gets no more than three years of English. Even those with seven years of English are not fluent. The students range in age from about 12 to 22 in the secondary schools; the few score in higher institutions are anywhere in their twenties.

"French is the national language and the language of instruction. English is far and away the most popular foreign language. Some German and Spanish is also taught.

"There are approximately 100 English teachers in the country, half in Ouagadougou. Of the total, about 25 are Voltan, about 50 French and the rest American, Canadian and British. Therefore three-quarters are not native speakers.

"The Peace Corps has six fulltime and six part-time English teachers in Voltan schools. The Canadian organization, Service Universitaire Canadien Outre-Mer (SUCO), has eight English teachers. USIS gives no classes but is active in furnishing English-teaching materials.

"It is hard to find a member of the Voltan élite who does not wish to acquire or improve his English, but commonly the English they learned in secondary school has rusted from disuse and few have the time or the determination to upgrade their knowledge of the language."

*The conclusion of this article will be published in a forthcoming issue.*

---

## CARIBBEAN FOOTNOTE

Among the inumerable islands strung out through the Caribbean like pearls on a string, one of the most interesting is St. Martin, administered half by the government of France and half by that of the Netherlands. There are no customs or passport formalities between the Dutch and French areas, and you can drive from one to the other without so much as stopping. However—at least when the editor and his family were there last several years ago—there was no telephone service between the two sections.

The language situation on St. Martin is worthy of note. In the Dutch half of the island schoolboys and schoolgirls are fed a heady diet of Dutch, English, French, and Spanish—all compulsory. In the French zone the language curriculum is the same, except that Dutch is eliminated.

And what, would you suppose, would be the one language almost universally spoken and understood by natives of this polyglot island?

You've guessed it—English.

## REPORT FROM RANGOON

The following notes have been supplied by our correspondent in Burma.

"All schools in Burma have been nationalized since 1965 and are now run by the national government. English is introduced in the fifth standard (roughly the same as the fifth grade) and is compulsory through the tenth standard. At this time, the high school examination is held. No foreign language other than English is taught in the schools and universities. There is however, an Institute of Foreign Languages where other tongues are taught, usually to people preparing to go abroad.

"The great majority of English language teachers are Burmese. The number of Anglo-Burmese and Anglo-Indian teachers of English is negligible.

"There are no schools in Burma where the language of instruction is English. This practice was discontinued when the schools were nationalized. When such schools were in existence, i.e. those where the instruction was in English, they were very popular with the upper income groups.

"There are two daily newspapers published in English, *The Guardian* (circulation 14,000) and *The Working People's Daily* (circulation 18,000). There is one fortnightly magazine, *Forward,* with a circulation of about 14,000. There are also two monthly magazines, *The Guardian* (circulation 8,000) and *Spectrum* (circulation 4,000). *Spectrum* contains the best articles from the leading publications of other countries.

"The Government of Burma is responsible for importing foreign films. Those imported from the United States, particularly the ones featuring James Bond, are among the most popular. Western popular music is also very well received. Radio Australia, the Voice of America Breakfast Show and the music programs of the Burma Broadcasting Service are all popular with Burmese listeners.

"All offers of foreign scholarships and fellowships must be made to the Burma government and the selection of suitable candidates is made by government officials. Most of the Burmese students are sent abroad on U.N. and Colombo Plan Scholarships. The majority of these students go to Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and a very few to the United States.

"The British Overseas Development Program has a lecturer here who is attached to the Education Ministry of the Union of Burma. He is training teachers of English at the Institute of Foreign Languages. There are no American agencies active in the teaching of English at this time.

"The current trend is toward raising the standard of English in Burma. English has been re-introduced as a major subject at the university level although the number of students selected to go into this field is still comparatively small.

"There is a great need for additional well-qualified teachers of English at all levels. However an expansion of training can only be inaugurated by the Burma Government."

## PREPONDERANCE OF ENGLISH IN WEST GERMANY

It comes perhaps as no surprise to learn that English enjoys a favored position as a foreign language in the Federal Republic of Germany *(West Germany).* As our correspondent from Bonn puts it: "In fields such as business, technology, science and defense a knowledge of English is regarded as essential. The teaching of English as the first and foremost foreign language is largely taken for granted, with small exceptions along the border with France and in certain traditionally francophile circles in southern Germany."

Now for a few words on the West German school system. There is a basic school *(Grundschule)* for all six to ten year olds which then branches off to either five more years in the same kind of school, now called *Hauptschule,* or to six more years in a middle school called *Realschule,* or to a nine-year high school called *Gymnasium.* Generally, the only foreign language taught in the *Hauptschule* is English – three to five years of it; this is a very recent development, the ultimate aim being that all children should study English for at least five years. In the *Realschule* English is taught as a compulsory subject for four to six years. The following other languages are offered: French, Spanish, Russian and Latin; however most students take only English. On the *Gymnasium* level, English is taught six to nine years, also as a compulsory subject; depending on the type of Gymnasium, the following languages are either compulsory subjects or electives: French, Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, Russian. Most of the English teachers are Germans, only a small number come from England or the United States. – In brief, English completely dominates foreign-language teaching in Germany.

The British Council is engaged in teacher exchanges and conferences for teachers. It also propagates the various language study opportunities existing in England and has on its staff a language expert who works closely with German teachers of English.

In summation, our Bonn informant has this to say:

"With the direction the learning, teaching and use of English is taking here, there is a marked shortage of well-trained teachers of English. Thus, the need is for better training of the teachers of teachers, expansion of language laboratory facilities, a vastly enlarged teacher exchange program, and adding the position of a language-teaching expert to the staff of USIS.

"In connection with your survey, one additional surface phenomenon comes to my mind, and that is the medium of music. American and English pop music is enormously popular among German youth, and the English language 'goes along with it,' making it an international vehicle of communication and commonly shared moods. – Also, worth noting is the fact that the German language of today is full of expressions borrowed from English – at least 5,000 of them."

## ENGLISH IN THE BUSINESS WORLD

As business gets more and more international, English is becoming as important an item of the overseas businessman's equipment as his brief-case. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in its English by Radio and Television Service is co-operating with Oxford University Press's ELTDU (English Language Teaching Development Unit) in researching into the kind of tuition businessmen need. One result of this is "English for Business—The Bellcrest Story"—a series of thirteen television films in color on the English of business, to be released in 1972. At first sight this is simply the dramatized story of a critical episode in the history of an electrical engineering company, with no overt teaching. But the dialogue and the action are devised in such a way as to demonstrate systematically not only the specialized vocabulary of the business world, but also the styles of speech and linguistic formulae appropriate to different situations (formal meetings, telephone conversations, social occasions, and so on). Wherever the series is shown, books and gramophone records or cassettes will be on sale; these take apart and exercise the teaching implicit in the films and cover the written aspect of "business English"—correspondence, minutes, documents and reports.

Another result of the BBC research is *BBC English for Management*. These are residential courses for non-English-speaking businessmen, held in conjunction with a management training organization at a center near High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. Groups of not more than twenty-five businessmen, all of whom are expected to have a basic knowledge of English, are given intensive, personalized tuition for two weeks. Pilot courses run through the summer of 1971 suggest that there is a real demand among senior business executives from the Continent and other highly industrialized, non-English-speaking countries for specialized instruction of this kind.

*A scene from the BBC series "English for Business"*

## SOMALIA: ENGLISH AND ITALIAN

Somalia—like Cameroon (see *EAW* No. 1, Nov. 1969)—is an interesting case from the point of view of language study in that it represents an amalgam of two European influences. In the case of Cameroon, the two were English and French, in that of Somalia, English and Italian. For present day Somalia represents the union of what formerly were British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland. In the former, the Northern Regions, English is the first foreign language, while in the Southern Regions, Italian has been the first. The Italian Government has expended great effort and much money to preserve Italian in the South but English is slowly taking hold among the young generation—even though all instruction at the University of Somalia is in Italian. However, a Fullbright Professor of English is being installed at the University, and this may make a change.

Our correspondent in Mogadiscio has the following to add:

"English is taught at all levels in schools in the North but in the South it shares importance with Italian in the middle and high schools. Since Somali—the native tongue—does not have a written language, Arabic is concentrated on at the elementary level. There are no teachers in the school system where the native language is English.

"The American International School teaches only English. It attracts some students of Somalia but the high tuition prevents many who would otherwise attend from enrolling. There also is a Russian-administered high-school—Benadir—where instruction is primarily English. These are besides the schools in the Northern Regions, all of which teach primarily in English."

The explanation given for English teaching at the Russian-administered school is interesting. It appears that the student body has no facility for learning Russian, whereas all the Russian teachers are fluent in English. Our correspondent also notes that most Somali students who go abroad to complete their studies go to Russia, but that is because of the generous student scholarship program which Russia offers. "Almost all who go to Russia," he concludes, "would prefer to go to the United States if the opportunity existed."

---

To the Editor:

Thank you for sending me a copy of your publication *English Around The World*, which I found most interesting.

Incidentally you may be interested in knowing that *Newsweek International*, which is printed in English, has a circulation of 325,000 throughout the Atlantic and Pacific areas, and that about 80% of our readers are foreign nationals, not Americans.

Thomas J. Quinn
International Editions,
Newsweek
New York

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

The May issue of "English Around the World" is particularly interesting.

Professor Kachru's article makes good reading. He indulges in a bit of special pleading, I think, over the inevitability and even desirability of indianized English. Up to a point I go along with him – after all we have big differences between English-English and American-English but it is important that these are not allowed to become too wide or we shall perpetuate and increase the difficulties of communication which already exist between Indians and the rest of us.

Thank you so much for keeping in touch. I do enjoy it.

Sybil Eccles
London

*It is good to hear again from the Viscountess Eccles, one of the most enthusiastic proponents of the English language on either side of the Atlantic.*

To the Editor:

I am doing a study of international secondary language usage at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, and recently obtained through the Italian Embassy in Washington certain figures which might be of interest to your readers.

According to the Italian Ministry of Public Instruction, of approximately 2,696,512 students in all four types of instruction at the secondary level, 1,163,636 are studying English, 1,625,223 are studying French, 123,877 are studying German and 14,531 are studying Spanish. There are 718 studying other languages including Serbo-Croatian, Esperanto, Russian, Greek, Portuguese and Arabic. The above figures apply to the 1968-69 school year.

At the elementary level, there is no foreign language requirement and figures for the university level are not available from the Ministry.

Kerry R. M. Kohring
Columbia, Missouri

*This letter is of particular interest to the editors, in view of an earlier letter, one from the distinguished linguist Mario A. Pei, which we published in our May, 1970 issue. In his letter Dr. Pei stated that about ten years ago he had located a comprehensive set of figures issued by the Italian Minister of Education listing the precise number of students of the various languages at all educational levels in Italian public schools and universities, and that he had been surprised to find French outstripping English by something like ten to one. So far as secondary education goes, the situation certainly seems to have changed!*

To the Editor:

I am pleased to report that the medical profession is rapidly becoming an English-speaking international fraternity. There is however some resistance to the English language primarily due to national pride and old established habits. To counteract this, I am offering a very simple recommendation. They can simply refer to it as the "Universal Language." What they call it is of little importance. To be able to communicate is most important.

In August, I addressed the Rotary Club of Lausanne, Switzerland and the Eleventh International Congress on Diseases of the Chest in the same city. Lausanne is a French speaking community and I was pleased when they readily accepted the idea of referring to the language as the "Universal Language." I was preceded on the platform by a prominent British surgeon, who was being honored that evening as the recipient of the "College Medal" who also stated that we were in need of a "Universal Language" for international communication.

Last year, there was an Asian-Pacific Congress on Diseases of the Chest held in Kyoto, Japan, largely attended by Japanese physicians. It was required that all of the papers at the Congress were to be read in English. This was a distinct departure from previous Congresses.

In Miami Beach, where I spend the winter months, there is presented annually the "Miss Universe Contest." The girls who do not speak English are handicapped in the competition when called upon for comments. It would enhance the contest if all of the girls spoke the "Universal Language."

I could write a volume on this subject, but I believe that this letter will give you a rough idea of my proposal to further the use of English as the "Universal Language." I shall be interested in having your comments.

Murray Kornfeld
Executive Trustee
American College
of Chest Physicians
Chicago

*This is a novel suggestion which—we hope—will stimulate remarks from our readers.*

To the Editor:

*English Around The World* is a particularly interesting and useful publication for our purposes, and I do hope you will put us on your permanent mailing list.

Elizabeth Sadler
Editor, *English Teaching Forum*
Washington

*It is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and perhaps borrowing belongs in the same category. In any event large segments of our Number 1 (November 1969) issue were reprinted verbatim in the September-October 1970 issue of English Teaching Forum, with due credit given and with our blessings. English Teaching Forum does not circulate in the United States, but goes, among other recipients, to teachers of English in over one hundred countries abroad. We are glad to see our product given as wide a distribution as possible, whether directly or indirectly.*